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THE HIGHEST BATTLE OF WORLD WAR II

by Steve Svare

Imagine you and your men are charged with assaulting a network of heavily fortified positions. Tough, but it's been done before. Let's add a few additional factors to make it more interesting.

You are attacking uphill. Against crack German units, almost fanatical in their defense. Artillery and mortar fire are falling all around you. Your target is high in the French Alps, almost 3000 meters up. Your troops are poorly equipped, and



German troops high in the French Alps

on top that, the bitter cold and biting wind threatens to finish you off if the Germans don't first.

This is exactly what three French battalions faced in the waning days of World War II. In April of 1945, the 27th Mountain Division, comprised mainly of former

maquisard, or partisans, found themselves with the unenviable task of dislodging the enemy from a series of heavily fortified positions high in the French Alps.

The German 5th Mountain Division, along with a company of the Italian Fascist *Folgore* Regiment, had retreated to several key points along the border between France and Italy. Most notable was the upper Maurienne area, centered around Mt. Cenis and overlooking the strategic Cenis Valley. Germany's army was in ruins, and less than a month remained before the Third Reich was completely finished. But these troops were determined to not give in, and they dug in for a spirited defense.

The Germans

Most of the defenders were of the 3rd Battalion, 100th Gebirgsjäger Regiment, 5th Mountain Division. Considered an elite formation, these troops had seen battle on several fronts. In March 1941 the Division was moved from Germany to the Balkans and took a prominent role in the war against Greece. The 5th Mountain Division was also picked to drop into Crete to support the

see **Highest Battle**, page 2

Spotting Rounds

Welcome to our first issue of the Forward Observer. As Coastal Fortress has expanded over the last couple of years, we found that we needed another outlet for ASL material that didn't conveniently fit into the website. Then Tom Repetti asked "When are you guys going to do a 'zine?'" That got the wheels spinning, and after months of hard work, here it is. We'll be featuring historical articles, ASL analysis, and personal looks at our hobby.

The Forward Observer is slated to be a seasonal publication, so look for the next issue when cooler weather rolls around. Until then, enjoy this offering.

If you have comments, criticisms, kudos, or ideas for future issues, please contact us at: coastalfortress@thegame.com.

Scott Faulk and Steve Svare

HÄNDE HOCH! -

Prisoners and Unarmed Units in ASL

by Tom Repetti

Prisoners - the red-headed stepchildren of ASL. Unloved by their own side, often mistreated by the side that captured them. Burdened with that goofy parenthesized (1) attack factor. Don't even come in any color but white. Many new players shy away from taking Prisoners because they don't want to deal with the complexities of the Rout Phase Surrender rules. That's actually fine; there are plenty of other things to learn in the game first. But eventually there comes a time when taking Prisoners will spell the difference between victory and defeat. Here's what you need to know.

Five Good Reasons for Taking Prisoners

1) Prisoners are worth double CVP for leaders and MMC if they are still under Guard at game end (A20.1). Even if they are eliminated by an attack from their own side, they immediately count for double CVP. They even count for double Exit VP as well, which often makes a big difference in scenarios where the Victory Conditions depend on Exit VP.

2) Taking Prisoners (or eliminating broken enemy units for Failure to Rout) is the best way to take enemy units off the map. Breaking enemy units is fine, but eventually they can rally and come back at you, and even broken enemy units can block or hinder your movement and rout. In the absence of heavy firepower or -3 leaders to generate KIAs on the IFT or Close Combat Table, rounding up broken enemy units is the most efficient way to get them out of your hair for good.

3) By keeping the Prisoners Welcome sign out, you avoid declaring No

see **Prisoners**, page 7

HIGHEST BATTLE

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Fallschirmjäger air assault, and then went on to help capture the rest of the island. After a period of refitting, the Division was transferred in October 1941 to the Volkhov region southeast of Leningrad. They served there for nearly a year before being posted to the Tenth Army in Italy. There they took part in battles south of Rome and the fighting retreat through the Gothic Line before being posted to the mountainous region between Italy and France.

They were supported by 20 field artillery pieces, including 75mm guns, 105mm howitzers, 150mm howitzers, plus several 81mm mortars.



The Cenis Valley

The Italians

A company of the Fascist *Folgore* Regiment were attached to the German units, bolstering the total strength of the various strongholds to almost 1500 men. With the addition of these elite Italian forces, the defenders greatly outmatched the French in experience and weapons. Although the Italians fought throughout the region, most of their activity was centered on defensive patrols.

The French

The 27th Mountain Division sent 3 Alpine Battalions into the operation. Comprised entirely of volunteers, almost 3000 men began the operation. Most had experience fighting the Germans as *maquis*, especially since the Normandy landings in June 1944. They had unique experi-

ence in the rugged alpine terrain, many having lived in the area prior to the war. But they were poorly equipped, armed mainly with light weapons. They were supported by as many as 45 smaller field guns, but they had to be disassembled and ported up the mountainsides through deep snow before being emplaced and prepared for support fire.

The Terrain

The Cenis Valley is dominated by the high snow-covered peaks of one of the largest solid glacier masses in Europe. Although the valley benefits from warm sunlight most of the winter and is shielded from the harshest of the winds tearing through the Alps, not so the mountainsides. Located not far from the Franco/Italian border, the area has a long history of encampments and fortresses being built for border patrols and supervision.

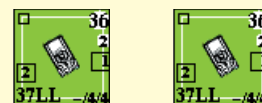
The first of the many camps to be built in this area was Fort Turra, established in 1891 mainly in response to the Italian outposts near Mount Cenis. It started

as a system of wooden huts on the south side of Mount Turra, designed to hold 160 men of the 13th BCA (strictly translated as *Mountain Hunter Battalion*, but commonly known as *Alpine* or *Mountain* troops) who were charged with supervising the border. In 1895 the fortress itself was built just to the north of the huts. It was dug directly into the mountainside, and featured four casemates for field artillery guns. Outside the main fortress were the buildings housing the men, various storage areas, a kitchen, and a bakery. Surrounded by a stone wall, and accessed by drawbridge, and supplemented by a network of barbed wire, the entire encampment originally housed 288 men.

From June 20-25 1940, Italian troops attempted to dislodge the French troops from Fort Turra, and thereby the valley

WHAT IN THE 'H'?

This regular section of the Forward Observer will offer a closer look at a vehicle found in the Chapter H of your ASLRB.



Vehicle: M8 Greyhound Armored Car
Nationality: USA
Chapter H Vehicle Note: American #42
Weight: 7.76 Tons
Length: 16'5" **Width:** 8'4" **Height:** 7'4.5"
Powerplant: Inline 6 cylinder, Hercules JXD @ 110hp running on gasoline
Maximum Speed: 55mph (36 MF)
Crew: 4 (CS of 4)
Armament: High velocity 37mm turreted gun (37LL), .30cal MG, .50cal MG.
Ammo Capacity: 37mm=80, .30cal=1500, .50cal=400
Forcing Depth: 2'
Maximum Elevation: 20'

In June of 1941, the US Army Ordnance Department drew up plans for an armored car equipped with a turreted 37mm main armament. Its original concept was as a highly mobile tank destroyer. Based on British implementation of armored cars in North Africa, it soon became clear that armored cars were better suited for recon and scouting roles.



In November of 1941, a 6 x 6 model, designated the T22, made by Ford, won the government contract over a Chrysler model. In May of 1942, the T22 was standardized as the "Light Armored Car M8". The initial production order was for six thousand. Many were lend-leased to the British, where the M8 picked up the *nom de guerre* of "Greyhound".

While in the Pacific the M8 was more than a match for Japanese armor, it was vastly undergunned to deal with German panzers. In the Eastern Theater the M8 found its niche in close infantry support, scouting and liaison roles.

Tips while using the M8 Greyhound in ASL:

- High mobility with the Greyhound will allow it to flank its opponents. While the 37LL is nearly worthless against the front glacis of most Panzers, a TK of 11 is somewhat dangerous when its firing into the side of German armor. Being a small target also aids this ability.
- If German armor can be tackled using tanks, do so. The Greyhound, with a Canister Depletion Number of 7 and two 4FP machine guns, is better suited for dealing with infantry.
- When opting to use smoke, take a look at the depletion of the sP. To use it, you have to roll a 5 or less on two dice. Being that the M8 is Open Topped, vehicular smoke grenades (F.10) is a roll of 2 or less on one die.

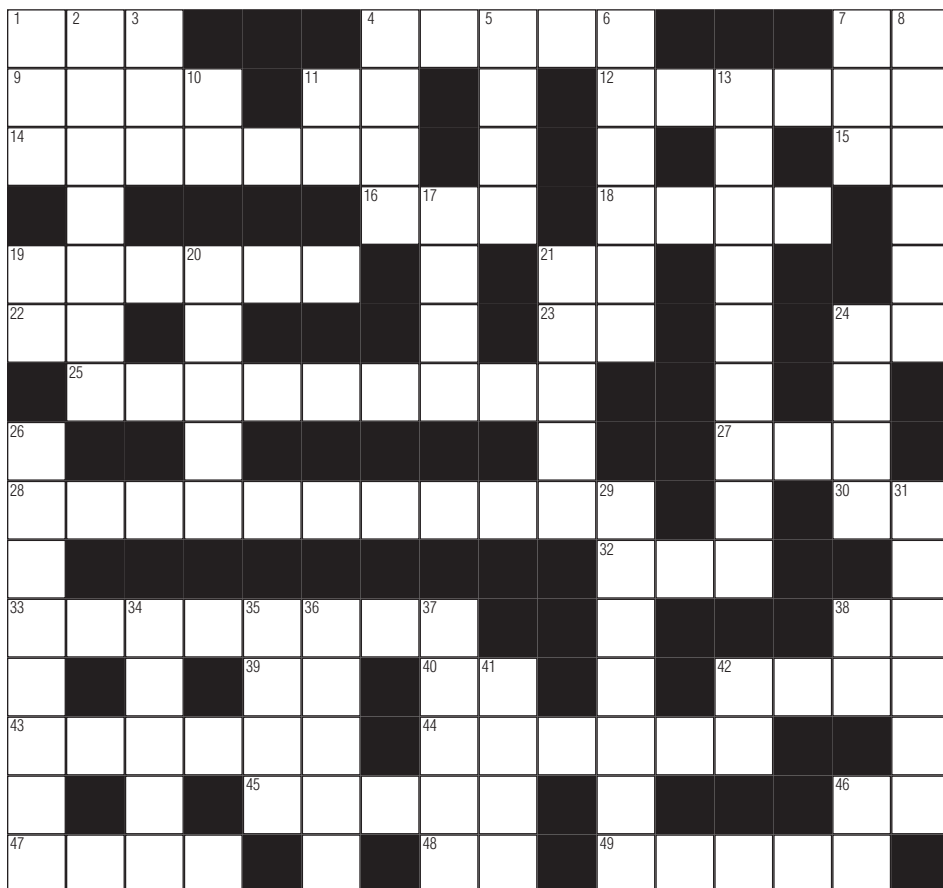
Some scenarios featuring the M8:

- A109: Scouts Out
- G3: The Forgotten Front
- G29: Shoot-n-Scoot
- SP33: The Eternal City
- TOT1: Take Ten
- TOT9: Beat Feet to Foy
- KE11: Lt. Elmo's Fire
- ASLUG24: Kicking Assenois
- TOT44: ...A Dish Best Served Cold
- CH Rout Pak II #8: Riding Shotgun

THE ENIGMA

(‘cause you can’t take your ASLRB to the can)

by Scott Faulk



Across

- 1- Japanese leaders ignore this IFT result
- 4- 1940 British Counterattack
- 7- ASL P "The Road ___ Wiltz"
- 9- Yugoslav partisan hero
- 11- Armor Piercing (abbr.)
- 12- First German city taken on the Western Front.
- 14- In season April through October
- 15- Opposite of you.
- 16- Tac 20 "___ Baptism"
- 18- Two Player turns is a ___ turn.
- 19- Polish Ambassador to Berlin 33-39.
- 21- One of Scott Romanowski's major hobby contributions
- 22- A40 "Ad Hoc ___ Beaurains"
- 23- Unit Replacement (abbr.)
- 24- Open Ground (abbr.)
- 25- German designation for the Kursk Operation.
- 27- This is a 7 for the Russians in ASL 1 "Fighting Withdrawal"
- 28- What those " ? " counters are for.
- 30- Example
- 32- This is a 3 for the Russians in ASL 1 "Fighting Withdrawal"
- 33- British Hero of Arnhem
- 38- ASL 78 "Hell ___ High Water"
- 39- Initials of WWII Pope's birth name.
- 40- Illumination Round (abbr.)
- 42- Eastern Terminus of the Kokoda Trail.
- 43- SP3 "Duel at ___"
- 44- Not Tanambogo
- 45- Brian Williams scenario "Rolin on the ___"
- 46- PP4 "Peak Hour ___ the Golf Hotel"
- 47- Final scenario in the GI Pack: "The ___"
- 48- In Reply
- 49- A38 "___ Bank"

Down

- 1- Chapter G
- 2- The Bismarck's sister ship
- 3- A roll of 8 on the 5fp column of the IIPT.
- 4- British improvement on APCR
- 5- ASL 29 "The Globus ___"
- 6- Chapter F Fortification
- 7- Woods have a +1 ___
- 8- ASLUG 12 "___ Bridge"
- 10- Postal abbreviation for the state that hosts ASLOK.
- 11- Before you place a spotting round
- 13- Ms. Denisova is one of these.
- 17- Spanish Division on the Eastern Front
- 19- Cheneaux, Stoumont and ___ Gleize
- 20- Red Barricades trick o' the trade (A23.7)
- 21- Tac 11 "Dance with the ___"
- 24- SP67 "Backs to the ___"
- 26- Case N: ___ Target
- 29- ___ Effects Modifier
- 31- British midget submarine.
- 34- A British line
- 35- German Army
- 36- Operation Iceberg started in this month.
- 37- Wittman's mode of transport at Villers-Bocage
- 38- A31 "___ the Road to Andalsnes"
- 41- On the Chapter H RFC table, gray denotes a vehicle is ___.
- 42- Opposite of CE.
- 46- Abbreviation of the makers of Squad Leader.

HALL OF HEROES

A LOOK AT WWII MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS



BARFOOT, VAN T.

Rank and organization:

Second Lieutenant, U.S. Army,
157th Infantry, 45th Infantry Division.

Place and date:

Near Carano, Italy, 23 May 1944.

Entered service at:

Carthage, Miss.

Birth:

Edinburg, Miss. G.O.

No.:

79, 4 October 1944.

Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty on 23 May 1944, near Carano, Italy. With his platoon heavily engaged during an assault against forces well entrenched on commanding ground, 2d Lt. Barfoot (then Tech. Sgt.) moved off alone upon the enemy left flank. He crawled to the proximity of 1 machinegun nest and made a direct hit on it with a hand grenade, killing 2 and wounding 3 Germans. He continued along the German defense line to another machinegun emplacement, and with his tommygun killed 2 and captured 3 soldiers. Members of another enemy machinegun crew then abandoned their position and gave themselves up to Sgt. Barfoot. Leaving the prisoners for his support squad to pick up, he proceeded to mop up positions in the immediate area, capturing more prisoners and bringing his total count to 17. Later that day, after he had reorganized his men and consolidated the newly captured ground, the enemy launched a fierce armored counterattack directly at his platoon positions. Securing a bazooka, Sgt. Barfoot took up an exposed position directly in front of 3 advancing Mark VI tanks. From a distance of 75 yards his first shot destroyed the track of the leading tank, effectively disabling it, while the other 2 changed direction toward the flank. As the crew of the disabled tank dismounted, Sgt. Barfoot killed 3 of them with his tommygun. He continued onward into enemy terrain and destroyed a recently abandoned German field-piece with a demolition charge placed in the breach. While returning to his platoon position, Sgt. Barfoot, though greatly fatigued by his Herculean efforts, assisted 2 of his seriously wounded men 1,700 yards to a position of safety. Sgt. Barfoot's extraordinary heroism, demonstration of magnificent valor, and aggressive determination in the face of point-blank fire are a perpetual inspiration to his fellow soldiers.

World War II Medal of Honor Recipients.

WWW: <http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/mohiia1.htm>
(May 2, 2001)

ORDER OF BATTLE - An Interview with the Atlanta Area ASL Group

by Scott Faulk

The "OoB" will be a recurring section of The Forward Observer. The premise of this series is to profile an ASL Club or Gaming Group in detail. New members, as well as grognards alike, might be in search of opponents and may not know there's a gaggle of dedicated dice-rollers in the community. This month we put the boys of the Atlanta Area ASL Group on the hot seat. They have a beautiful webpage: <http://personal.atl.bellsouth.net/atl/a/a/aaaslg> and run an annual ASL event at the Warfair Table-Top Gaming Convention.



FO (Forward Observer):

Exchanging emails here with Barry Johnston of the "fledgling" (in ASL club terms) Atlanta Area ASL Group. Barry is just an example of the new wave of die-hards coming into the ASL fold, taking the reins and organizing a loose knit pocket of gamers into a solid foundation for a region to build on.

FO: *So we know that clubs always spring from a few guys getting together and playing for a bit, then deciding to form an organized group. Who were the core guys and who were the decision makers for the start-up of the AAASLG?*

Barry Johnston: Before the start of AAASLG (founded February 2000) I had been playing two to three times a month with Doyle Davidson. I was still very much a newbie but Doyle had brought me a long way, up to including the use of armor. Well, Doyle and his wife were expecting their second child so I knew that our playing time would be greatly reduced once the new baby arrived. At that time I knew of maybe 4 other players in Atlanta. I knew there were more ASL players out there, however, I just didn't know how to get in touch with them. Doyle had really set the ASL hook deep in my mouth so I just had to find a way to play more ASL. So I asked the ASLML for advice on starting a club and I got some great replies from

guys like Louie Tokarz, Ron Mosher, Roy Connelly, Robert Wolkey, Steve Linton, Pete Belford, Jim Aikens, John Slotwinski and Matt Shostak. These guys



Barry Johnston, Mike Black, Jeff Jarrell, Dave Jarrell, Cliff Emery and Ken Smith

really inspired me and I reached out through the ASLML, local hobby stores and ASL Player Directories to find other ASL players in Atlanta. Mike Davison quickly helped out by volunteering to build and webmaster our webpage. Adam Vakiener stepped up in the foundation of a club ladder, and Mike Black has been just a huge force for us in helping to teach the game to all of us and provide 15 + years of ASL and SL experience. Anyway, within 1 month of sending my first email about clubs to the ASLML, I had founded AAASLG, had 16 members join and we had our first meeting with 15 ASL players in attendance. Talk about a great day, we all felt like we had met our long lost brothers.

FO: *How many members does your club have now?*

Barry: 36 in one year!

FO: *You guys have regular meetings? When and where?*

Barry: We have monthly meetings (game days). We have two main meeting sites that we alternate with due to the "sprawl" of Atlanta (the metro area is about 50 miles north to south and 50 miles east to west). This way the same guys don't have to drive across town every meeting. We meet at a local game shop, The Warroom (on the NE side of Atlanta) that has a 3,000 sq. ft. gaming area and also at a local National Guard Armory (W side of Atlanta). Meetings

are on Saturdays and we play from 10:00am to 8:00 or 9:00pm.

FO: *How large, in area, is your membership draw? In other words, how long is the longest commute?*

Barry: The majority of our membership is local but we do have a member in Dalton in north-east Georgia that commutes about 1.5 hours, 2 members in Macon that drive about 1.5 hours, 2 more in Athens that drive at least 1 hour depending on the meeting site, and 1 in South Carolina that drives 1.5 hours.

FO: *Atlanta has a nation-wide reputation as being a "commuter" city. Meaning that people only live there temporarily and are usually native to other parts of the country. Have you found that a problem with this? Do you think it will be a problem in the future?*

Barry: We have had one member join and then move to Birmingham, Alabama due to work. We do have a large percentage of non-native Georgians as members. I'm just guessing, but off the top of

The 2nd Annual ASL Battle of Atlanta will be held on June 15-17th, in conjunction with Warfair 2001, a miniatures convention.

The tourney will feature themed rounds and will be run by Mike Black. Prizes will be awarded.

The tourney will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in NW Atlanta. Convention admission for the weekend is \$15.00 if your name appears on the Atlanta Area ASL Group guest list or \$25.00 at the door. Please email me if you plan on attending so that I can add you to our guest list. If you've already pre-registered your convention packet will be available to pick up when you arrive.

Hotel information: Crowne Plaza Hotel, 6345 Powers Ferry Rd. NW, Atlanta, GA 30339
Phone: (770) 955-1700

Discount rooms are available at \$79.00 per night. Be sure to mention Warfair 2001 when registering to get the discount.

If you would like any further information or have questions please email Barry at CplJohnst@aol.com

my head, I'd say that we are 70% non-native to 30% native to Atlanta. I'm sure that we will have members that move to another part of the country, but hopefully

ORDER OF BATTLE

continued from page 4

the influx of new members moving to our area will counterbalance those that have to move on.

FO: *How about a snippet AAR of the last AAASLG game day?*

Barry: Fourteen members made it and scenarios played included T1: "Gavin Take", BRT3: "Ryan's Orphans", S: "The Whirlwind", J19: "Merzenhausen Zoo", J5: "Bizory Loves Company", 55: "Retribution" and a couple of others that I didn't record for some reason. Also played were a couple of playtest scenarios.

FO: *We noticed there are no "third party" scenarios among what was played at the last meeting. Was that coincidental or is there a definite preference?*

Barry: Just a coincidence. At most meetings you're bound to see scenarios ranging from official to Schwerpunkt, Heat of Battle, Critical Hit, Dispatches from the Bunker and many others. I do see a lot of Schwerpunkt stuff being played. With our monthly meetings, the tourney sized scenarios that they produced are very popular. It is very easy to get in two and sometimes three of those at one of our meetings.

FO: *You guys IFT or IIFT?*

Barry: We play both. I would venture that most of our scenarios are played with the IIFT but everyone seems amicable about playing either.

FO: *Care to give us the 411 on the 2001 Battle of Atlanta?*

Barry: This years tourney will be run by Mike Black. June 15, 16, and 17th. Hotel price is \$79.00 per night. We piggyback with a local miniatures convention called Warfair. Twenty-four hour access to the game room. Swiss style tourney, more info forthcoming. Check out the club webpage at <http://personal.atl.bell-south.net/atl/a/a/aaaslg> and click on the ASL Battle of Atlanta/Warfair 2001 poster for the latest. Projected attendance is around 20 players but this could grow depending on out of towners.

FO: *I noticed the RB CG AAR on the site. Everyone loves RB CG stuff. Care to give us the latest on the battle?*

Barry: We just wrapped the CG up, mainly due to a lack of playing time. This was my second CG, but first of RB and Mike and Patrick's first. We both made plenty of mistakes, but due to our newness to CG's things have turned out to be fairly even at the point we stopped at (Oct. 22nd), although as the Russian player I think I had a good edge. I'll admit that could have changed quickly on the next date when the entire western edge would have opened up.

FO: *Any tips learned through play to share?*

Barry: If you ever get a chance to play a CG do so. It is the best way to learn the finer points of the game. You will be exposed to tons of situations and events that will make you a better player and increase your knowledge of the game. Also, I would have lost a lot if Mike and Patrick had attempted the armored blitz, I was unprepared for it.

FO: *What would you like to see AAASLG do in the future?*

Barry: I would love to see a newsletter. In fact I would do it myself but my plate is sort of full as I'm the meeting date planner and playtest coordinator right now. I don't think I can fit any more hats on my head.

FO: *I also briefly spoke to Mike Davison, the webmaster of the impressive AAASLG webpage. He stated that he probably didn't have much to add that Barry wasn't going to tell us. He also strongly stated that Barry deserves the credit for bringing the AAASLG into being and being the driving force behind its continued success.*

Thanks Barry, and thanks for letting us peek into the ASL world of Atlanta.

**If you'd like your club or group to be profiled in an upcoming issue of "The Forward Observer" please contact us at coastalfortress@thegame.com.*

What's in the Next Issue:

History In Focus:

Actions in the Reichswald

In-Depth Scenario Analysis:

Taking a Look at a Schwerpunkt Favorite

Islands Under Fire:

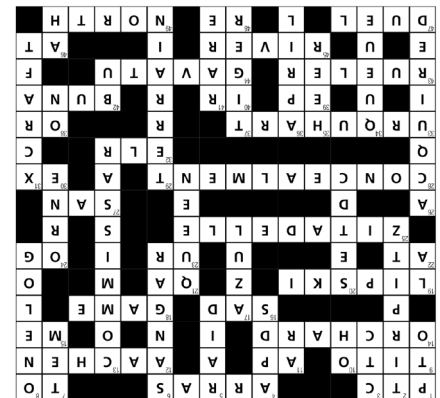
A Look at Gavutu-Tanambogo

Club Interview:

Southern Kansas ASL Club

Plus all our recurring features.

THE ENIGMA SOLUTION



What's Not in the Next Issue:

History In Focus:

Paraguay's Role in WWII

In-Depth Scenario Analysis:

Ron Mosher Takes A Look At Critical Hit's Latest

Shovels and Sand:

Full-size Outdoor ASL Boards

Club Interview: Why I play SASL

Plus a random assortment of odds and ends.

Salute!



We would like to thank the following contributors: Tom Repetti, John Provan, Barry Johnston, Mike Davidson, Paul Kenny, and Chris Olden. We would also like to thank Rodney Kinney for permission to use the VASL artwork and mapboards.

HIGHEST BATTLE

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leading to the villages below. Fort Turra held out and remained unconquered throughout the war. The garrison stationed there received military honors at the end of the war.

Fort du Mont Froid, where the action we are discussing took place, traces a similar history and design as Fort Turra. Built into the side of Mount Froid, it dominates the entire valley below, along with several passes and nearby peaks.

The Battle

On 5 April 1945, the French battalions began their offensive against the German positions. Their first objective was to take Mount Froid (2820m) which overlooked the valley and was the cornerstone of the German positions. The German stronghold, located on a narrow ridge seven to eight hundred meters across, was organized around three main points: east and west blocks with run-down casemates and a central bunker surrounded by a network of trenches.

4th Company, 11th BCA was able to take the central and western points by the end of the day. The next day, the same unit was able to capture the eastern section. The French were elated with their victory, but quickly realized the precariousness of their situation. They were a long distance from any supply base, and the Germans were preparing to retake the fortress. Coupled with the loss of men suffered in the initial assault, things looked bleak.

Fortunately, 6 April saw reinforcements arrive. Elements of 2nd Company, 11th BCA, and the entire force of 4th Company, 6th BCA managed to reach the outpost. Climbing the rugged terrain covered in deep snow without benefit of skis or snowshoes, these men carried extra ammunition and supplies to their beleaguered comrades. As the daylight faded, the temperature dropped and a thick fog settled over the area, making it especially difficult to observe German advance troop movements.

A short time before midnight the enemy shelling began. Immediately behind this came a German company and two Italian platoons, split up into five groups. They quickly made for the eastern casemate, with three groups attempting a frontal assault while the other two tried to outflank the position. Gunfire erupted from small arms everywhere, soon joined by mortar shells and artillery exploding on top of the fortress. Combined with grenades and Panzerfaust shells, the German fire quickly threatened to overwhelm the French garrison. A platoon of 4th Company, 6th BCA was dispatched to the eastern casemate to help.

Two officers and a private were killed inside the fort, with three others wounded. But the quick action of the platoon allowed the rest of the men in the eastern casemate to withdraw to the center portion of the fortress, under constant fire from the Germans and Italians. Again



Fort Turra today

the enemy attacked, screaming across the mountainside firing submachineguns and throwing grenades at the central bunker. The French put up a vigorous fight, actually forcing the German and Italian units back. They attackers quickly regrouped though, and were able to close to very close range. Several French soldiers were killed or wounded, but the rest of the men kept up a spirited defense [singing the *Chant de d'part*]. By dawn, the attackers had withdrawn.

During the day of 6 April, a snowstorm blew down through the peaks of the Alps and made the conditions even more harsh. The temperature dropped quickly, and visibility was reduced to almost nothing. The French were exhausted, beginning to suffer from frostbite, and many of their weapons were frozen solid. The Germans launched several more failed attacks over the next several days, keeping the French under constant pressure and harassment. It wasn't until 9 April before 4th Company, 6th BCA was relieved by other elements of the 27th Mountain Division.

Aftermath

After failing in three counterattacks, the German command decided to evacuate the entire sector around Mount Cenis. But Generaloberst von Vietinghoff, commander-in-chief of the German front in Italy, disregarded this decision and ordered Mount Froid recaptured at any price. After receiving sorely needed reinforcements from other groups of the



The ruins of Fort du Mont Froid

PRISONERS

continued from page 1

Quarter. This ensures that broken enemy units will continue to surrender peaceably to your guys rather than Low Crawl away, perhaps to fight you another day. By avoiding No Quarter, you also ensure that Encircled broken enemy units will surrender rather than rout away, even if a valid rout path is available (A20.21); it is SO much easier to take buildings when you don't have to root every brokie out of his upper-level hideout. Mopping Up (A12.153) is also possible if you have not declared No Quarter, again making it much easier to secure large buildings. Also, when No Quarter is in effect, Heat of Battle Surrender results turn into Berserk (A15.5), a hassle you just don't need.

4) There are some benefits to being a Guard, most notable of which is the ability to auto-Deploy (without a leader) regardless of nationality restrictions (A20.5). This allows the Guard player to generate a stream of Guard halvesquads, often lending his side a certain amount of tactical flexibility that non-Deploying nationalities like the Russians, Italians, and Chinese don't normally have.

5) When Interrogation is in effect, Prisoners can yield valuable information about the enemy forces (E2.1).

How to Take Prisoners

OK, now that you're properly motivated, you flip impatiently to A20.1 to find out how you too can get in on this Prisoner bandwagon. There are four ways to take Prisoners:

1) **The Rout Phase Method** (A20.21). If you have a unit¹ ADJACENT to a broken enemy unit that cannot rout away at all or would have to suffer Interdiction or resort to Low Crawl if it did rout away, it will surrender to your unit instead, dropping all of its SW and turning in its colors for one of those spiffy (1)-0-6 Prisoner counters². As mentioned above, Encircled units will surrender even if they have a valid rout path, as will Disrupted units (A20.21). However, if you have declared No Quarter by rejecting such a surrender³, broken enemy

units will Low Crawl away rather than surrender to you; No Quarter turns off the flow of docile, well-mannered surrendering brokies.

Who doesn't surrender by the Rout Phase Method? Tough guys like IJA, Gurkhas, Partisans, Commissars, Fanatics, and SS when facing Russians, as well as those normally-milquetoast guys you hardened by declaring No Quarter. So why would you ever *want* to declare No Quarter? Well, sometimes it's automatically in force, as is the case in Red Barricades, in Chinese vs Japanese



Unarmed units, the former defenders of Aachen, are marched through the ruined city.

scenarios after 1937 or the greater PTO after May 1942, or for the British in Pegasus Bridge scenarios. Also, at some point in the game, you might not want a particular unit to be burdened with Prisoners just before it engages in an important attack or move. You also might want to take Mike McGrath's advice to never capture -2 or -3 leaders, as they can use their great leadership to modify the CC attacks they participate in, should those Prisoners ever try to Escape.

Say what? Yes, that's right, Prisoner SMC retain their normal morale and leadership levels (A20.5), so amid the defeated Morale Level 6 rabble of the Prisoner MMC, you can have a ML10 ringleader just waiting for his chance to

direct an escape attempt. Thus McGrath's advice; don't capture -2 or -3 leaders; they're too likely to survive incoming fire while your Guard unit breaks, and they're great at directing the Close Combat of an Escape attempt. Note that while A10.21 doesn't seem to rule out a Prisoner leader applying his leadership modifier to any friendly units in the Location, Perry sez that the only thing captured leaders can do is modify CC attacks they participate in.

2) **Capture in CC** (A20.22) - Normally the CCPh is a time for kill-or-be-killed, but there are times when you'll be thinking capture instead of kill, the most important of which is CC against Inexperienced Infantry, because they're actually easier to capture than kill. A19.35 notes that the normal +1 CC DRM for a Capture attempt is actually -1 vs Inexperienced Infantry⁴. Bad news for the commander of Conscripts who can't think of much use for them besides CC; they're not very good at that, either⁵.

Note, however, what happens when your unit gets killed while capturing a unit in CC; your guy dies and your newly-captured Prisoner is freed and replaced by a Conscript unit (A20.221). Bad show, that; the lesson is: don't try to capture units while there's enough enemy CC strength around to kill your capturing unit.

3) **Mopping Up** (A12.153) - Pretty straightforward, and often the best way to ensure that you've really cleaned all the HIP units out of a huge building, at the cost of just a halvesquad or two being TI for a player turn.

4) **Recapturing Unarmed or Disrupted enemy units via CC in the MPH** (A20.54 and A19.12). This is almost ridiculously easy. You can move right into an Unarmed or Disrupted unit's Location⁶ and attempt to capture it via CC in the Movement Phase, at no MF cost, even⁷. For Disrupto Boys, this is necessary only if No Quarter is in effect; if the Prisoners Welcome sign is still out, Disrupted units will *automatically* surrender to same-Location non-Melee units during any phase or to ADJACENT units at the start of the RtPh. For Unarmed units, the ease of being

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recaptured makes it obvious what they need to do: get Armed, one way or another. More on that later.

Miscellaneous Sundry Things About Taking Prisoners

- Berserkers do not take Prisoners, nor can they be captured (A20.2).
- Routing is different at Night; there is no elimination for Failure to Rout and units can Low Crawl ADJACENT to (but not toward) a Known Enemy Unit (E1.54). This makes rounding up Prisoners at Night harder than it is during the daytime; you have to surround the broken enemy unit and often you'll need to advance into CC with it in order to Capture it.
- When units surrender and drop their SW, a friendly Good Order SMC in their Location can automatically recover the SW without a recovery dr (A4.44).
- Surrender can't be refused in North Africa (F.5). The same goes for A Bridge Too Far unless the Guard unit is already guarding the maximum amount of Prisoners. No Quarter is in effect for Red Barricades, of course.
- If a unit cannot adequately Guard all of the units which want to be its Prisoner, the excess is freed as Unarmed units (A20.21)⁸.

Proper Handling of Prisoners

Well, not "proper" in terms of "Geneva Convention" proper, but more like "squeezing every bit of advantage the ASL rulebook will allow" proper. I mean, c'mon!

First, though, let's clarify something. There are two and only two types of (1)-0-6 counters: Prisoners and Unarmed units. A Prisoner is a unit that has been captured and is still under Guard. An Unarmed unit can appear in several ways, mainly as ex-Prisoners who have either escaped or been Abandoned. Prisoners and Unarmed units share a lot of the same characteristics, but their status is like a binary toggle switch; once a Prisoner escapes or is abandoned, it automatically becomes an Unarmed unit and is under the control of its original side.

There is no such thing as an "unguarded Prisoner" or an "Unarmed unit under Guard". With that in mind, let's talk about how to handle Prisoners.

Watching Over Them

Prisoners occupy the same Location as their Guards and share the Entrenched status of their Guard without causing Overstacking penalties (A20.51)⁹. Conversely, a Pillbox may never be overstacked (A5.6), so a Guard squad may not escort a squad-sized Prisoner into a 1+X+Y Pillbox; they'd have to Deploy both Guard and Prisoner beforehand so that only one squad-equivalent (one Guard HS plus one Prisoner HS) occupied the Pillbox. Since Crest status is a type of Entrenchment, if the Guard is in Crest status, so is the Prisoner.

Beyond a Guard's ability to auto-Deploy itself, it can also auto-Deploy its Prisoners (A20.51), which comes in handy for the abovementioned Pillbox entry as well as passing the Prisoner halvesquads around to enable more Guard units to auto-Deploy. In addition, more Prisoner halvesquads makes it less likely that their Guard will be chosen for any Random Selection dr's that need to be made for that stack, as for K/# or KIA results.

Prisoners get transferred or abandoned during the Rally Phase and at the start of the Advance Phase just like SW (A20.5). However, they cannot be dropped purposely during the MPh like SW.

Prisoners do not qualify as Known Enemy Units for purposes of affecting enemy routs, nor are they Sniper targets (A14.22) or targets for Berserkers (A20.4). At Night, Prisoners do affect the Majority Squad Type for that stack (E.4), making it more likely that their stack is Lax (E1.62), with all the Bad Things that implies.

Moving With Them

Prisoners move at the foot rate of their Guards¹⁰. The Guarding side can even load them up on a vehicle if the vehicle has sufficient transport capacity for them all¹¹. Guards escorting Prisoners may leave the map off a Friendly Board Edge and not be counted as eliminated for CVP (A20.53).

Being Fired On With Them

Incoming fire affects the Prisoners and Guard alike¹². Both Prisoners and Guards take Morale Checks normally, although Prisoners do not break, they Casualty Reduce (A20.54). Remember that Prisoner SMC retain their non-Prisoner morale levels, so they can be more likely to pass a MC than their Guards. Their leadership modifiers, however, cannot be used to aid the Morale Checks of their fellow Prisoners or Good Order friendly units who happen to be in that Location (Perry sez). On the bright side, Prisoners do not take LLMC/LLTC (A20.54). Prisoners also do not Pin, but instead



More Exit VP for the Ami's

share the Pinned status of their Guards (A20.54). K/# results affect whichever unit is selected by Random Selection (another reason to deploy Prisoner squads). DR's made for Prisoners do not activate SAN (A14.1).

If their Guard breaks, the Prisoners are still under Guard (although they could be looking to make an Escape attempt in the next CCPh)¹³. If the Guard is eliminated, the Prisoner immediately transfers to another eligible enemy unit in the

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Location regardless of Phase (A20.5); if no such new Guard exists, the ex-Prisoner is freed as an Unarmed unit and can be moved by its original owner.

Making Them Work

Prisoners can be forced to perform labor tasks such as Entrenching and clearing Rubble, Flames, and Roadblocks (A20.5). Note, though, that the Guard is also TI and subject to Hazardous Movement while its Prisoners are working¹⁴.

Firing While Guarding Them

If a Guard's Unit Size (US) #¹⁵ is less than the combined US # of all of its Prisoners, the only time it can attack units other than its Prisoners is in CC, and even then its CC attack (not defense) strength will be halved (A20.52)¹⁶. This argues against a Guard squad auto-Deploying its Prisoners, as the US# of the two Prisoner halvesquads will be four, thus restricting the Guard's attack and interdiction options.

When Good Prisoners Go Bad

A20.55 talks about Escape. It's pretty straightforward: if the Guard breaks, the Prisoners rout with the Guard (if it routs) and then try to pass an NTC in the upcoming CC Phase¹⁷. If they pass, they'll rise up and engage their Guards in CC, using the leadership modifier of any leader Prisoner who's joining the Revolution¹⁸. Since the broken Guard can't attack back, the Prisoners aren't risking anything here. Remember too that Prisoner revolts are one of those sequential CC situations, so the Prisoner gets to attack first before any other CC takes place in that Location (A11.33).

If the initial CC turns into a Melee, the broken Guard will not attempt to Withdraw from the next turn's Melee like broken units normally do (A11.16), but there's nothing that says the Prisoners have to stick around; they're free to Withdraw from the Melee and make their dash to freedom.

Life on the Run: Unarmed Units

Once your boys have made good their Escape, they become Unarmed units and

are once again under the control of their original owner. As (1)-0-6's, they're still not good for much since that (1) attack factor which can only be used in CC vs Personnel, but there's hope. At least any escaped SMC's can take their original counter form again, and in fact are automatically Armed (A20.551).

Job One for an Unarmed unit: get out of danger. Unarmed units are easy for the enemy to recapture via CC in the Movement or Close Combat Phase, so they need to beat feet to safety. Job two is: get Armed. The Index says that an Armed Personnel unit is essentially one that is not represented by an Unarmed [i.e., (1)-0-6] counter, while an Unarmed unit is one "without Inherent FP usable on the IFT unless mounting or possessing a functioning Gun/SW." While the latter may be interpreted several ways in the case of a (1)-0-6 who possesses a functioning Gun/SW, Perry says that, indeed, such a unit is both Armed and Unarmed¹⁹. That is, as soon as the Unarmed unit, the one represented by a (1)-0-6 counter, can recover a functioning SW or Gun, it is considered Armed most (though not all) of its social stigma goes away. In order to trade in its (1)-0-6 Unarmed counter for a Green or Conscript unit of the same size, the unit has to Rearm (A20.551) or Scrounge (A20.552) some Small Arms²⁰.

Until they become armed, Unarmed units are odd creatures, governed by a melange of rules scattered throughout the rulebook. The major considerations are:

- Unarmed units are always subject to Inexperienced Personnel restrictions (A19.3) regardless of leader presence.
- Unarmed units are still Good Order (A.7).
- Unarmed units are not Armed, unless they possess a functioning Gun/SW (see the Index).

All of these together add up to a long list of what Unarmed units can and can't do that's illustrated on the following page.

Now I Have A Machine Gun: Rearming Unarmed Units

As you can tell from the table above, Unarmed units are much easier to think

about once they become Armed. If they manage to eliminate their Guards while escaping or if their Guards are themselves Captured, Prisoners can skip the whole Unarmed thing and go right to being a Green or Conscript unit using the weapons they snatched from their former captors (A20.551). Unarmed units can also Scrounge enough Small Arms to become a Green or Conscript unit, either by running around looking for them on the ground (A20.552) or by finding them on a non-burning wreck or abandoned vehicle (D10.5). By far, the easiest way for an Unarmed unit to get Armed is to recover a Support Weapon from a friendly unit. Brother, can you spare a LMG?

Miscellaneous Oddities

Would it be ASL if there weren't incredible chrome?

- Gurkhas don't get the -1 CC DRM if all of the attacking units are Unarmed (A25.43).
- Infantry above a Panji counter may not guard an Unarmed unit beneath the Panji (and vice-versa, G9.56).
- Paratroops don't rout or surrender on the turn they land (E9.5)
- Axis Minor Prisoners will not try to escape, but Hungarians *in Hungary* will (A20.55).
- Allied Prisoners in Caves pretty much sit there and count stalagmites unless they magically escape or are rearmed, at which time they are instantly teleported to the Cave's Entrance Hex (G11.98).
- MMC Swimmers become Unarmed units unless they have been able to build a Raft (E6.41).

Credits and Thanks

As always, my articles benefit from the superb comments, suggestions, and beta-testing of Bret Hildebran, Dade Cariaga, Tim Wilson, Phil Pomerantz, JR Tracy, and Rodney Kinney. Also, big thanks to Perry Cocke and Scott Jackson for their many comments on the murkier aspects of the issue at hand.

UNARMED UNITS REFERENCE CHART

This chart applies to non-Prisoner (1)-0-6 units which do not possess a functioning Gun/SW. Once such a unit does possess a functioning Gun/SW, it is Armed and the box in the second row, second column, no longer applies. Once a (1)-0-6 Rearms (A20.551) or Scrounges (A20.552) Small Arms, it is replaced with a Green or Conscript unit of the same size and this entire table (aside from the Inexperienced Personnel restrictions) no longer applies to it.

Because they're Unarmed, they can:

- Pin (A20.54)
- Be captured by CC during the Movement Phase (A20.54)
- Freely Deploy/Recombine without a leader (A1.31/1.32)

Because they're Unarmed, they can't:

- Use their Firepower to attack in any way except CC vs Personnel (A20.5)
- Use Inherent SW like PF/MOL/ATMM (C13.31/A22.61/C13.7)
- Undergo Heat of Battle (A15.1)
- Block enemy movement through their Location (A4.14) [EXC: Unarmed IJA can, G1.15].
- Enter a Location containing a Known Enemy Unit (A20.5/A20.54) [EXC: Unarmed IJA can, G1.15]. This has strong implications for their behavior in a Human Wave, Banzai, or Infantry Overrun.
- Break; they Casualty Reduce instead (A10.3)
- Use CCRF (D7.21)
- Avoid Inexperienced Personnel restrictions even when stacked with a leader (A19.3)

Because they're still Good Order, they can:

- Recover/repair/assemble/dm/destroy/use non-inherent SW/Guns
- Be a Spotter
- Clear Wire/Mines or dig Foxholes (B24.7/B27.11)
- Kindle (B25.11)
- Fire a Starshell (E1.921)
- Push Guns (C10.3)
- Search (A12.152)
- Carry a wounded leader (A17.2)
- Participate in a Human Wave/Banzai (A25.23/G1.5) or Infantry Overrun at 8 MF (A4.15 and A19.31).
- Enter a sewer or tunnel (B8.4/B8.61)
- Climb (B11.4)
- Go to Crest status (B20.91)
- Stop friendly units from straying at Night (E1.532)
- Advance (A4.7)
- Deny enemy entrance into a fortified building location (B23.922)
- Gain concealment
- Deny/strip concealment or reveal hidden fortifications due to being in LOS
- Provide a temporary crew for an AFV (A21.22)
- Count for exit VP normally

Because they're not Armed, they can't:

- Interdict
- Be forced to use Final Protective Fire (A8.312)
- Keep enemy units from trying to recover a SW in their Location (A4.44)
- Upper-level Encircle enemy units (A7.72)
- Restrict enemy SFF options (A8.3)
- Restrict broken enemy units from ending the RtPh ADJACENT to them (although broken enemy units still cannot rout ADJACENT to them {A10.5/10.51}) [EXC: at Night]
- DM broken enemy units by moving ADJACENT (A10.62)
- Act as Known Enemy Units to prevent routing towards them while in their LOS (A10.51)
- Enable enemy units to voluntarily break (A10.41)
- Be a personnel escort for CC vs a friendly vehicle (A11.51)
- Cause Search Casualties (A12.154)
- Mop Up (A12.153)
- Fail ELR (A19.11)
- Capture Prisoners via the RtPh or Mop Up methods (A20.21)
- Guard Prisoners (A20.5)
- Force Human Wave/Banzai units to enter their Location (A25.234)
- Gain control of Locations/buildings/pillboxes or contest enemy control (A26.11/A26.132)
- Claim Wall Advantage (B9.32)

Because they're Inexperienced, they:

- Only have 3 MF unless being carried or by mounting/dismounting any form of conveyance (A19.31)
- Are Lax (A19.36 and A11.18)
- Cower two columns instead of one (A19.33)
- Have a -1 CC DRM vs Capture instead of the normal +1 (A19.35)
- Take IPAATC's instead of normal PAATC's.
- Use SW with a B# one less than normal (A19.32)

HÄNDE HOCH ARTICLE FOOTNOTES

- ¹ A Known armed Good Order infantry/Cavalry unit, to be precise. Vehicles and their PRC, then, cannot take Prisoners and will eliminate such broken enemy units for Failure to Rout rather than take them Prisoner, without any implications for No Quarter. This is sometimes a good thing.
- ² Broken enemy stacks will surrender simultaneously (A20.21).
- ³ Or Massacring your own Prisoners (A20.4).
- ⁴ True to their comic opera ASL style, the Italians give us a chuckle; the -1 Capture DRM also applies to all non-elite Italian infantry.
- ⁵ True to *their* ASL style, Japanese can commit Hara-Kiri in order to thwart CC Capture attempts (G1.641). If we ever find a PTO scenario where the VC's reward taking IJA prisoners, we'll let you know.
- ⁶ Not "hex" as A19.12 says, that's some ASLRB v2 errata that slipped through the proofreaders.
- ⁷ Eliminating an escaped or abandoned Prisoner in this manner invokes the Massacre rules (A20.53), so be careful.
- ⁸ As Unarmed units, they are immediately under the control of their original owner, but they don't have to move away from the Guard in their next MPH. If they're bent on retribution via CC with the Guard, they can stay in the Guard's Location with a CC counter on them (Perry sez).
- ⁹ Bizarre but true: it's possible for two enemy squads, each guarding their maximum allowance of five Prisoner squads, to occupy the same 1S Foxhole.
- ¹⁰ Perry sez this even applies to wounded leader Prisoners. Ouch!
- ¹¹ You don't want to know what happens if the Passenger/Rider Guard unit breaks, is eliminated, or abandons its Prisoner while onboard the transport. Well, yes you do. Since only Infantry may escape (A20.55), the Prisoners will not try to escape if the Guard unit

breaks. If the Guard is KIA'd outright or abandons the Prisoners onboard the vehicle, we are treated to the spectacle of an Unarmed unit riding an uncooperative enemy vehicle. If they are Riders, the Unarmed unit can Bail Out. If they are Passengers or would rather not Bail Out, they can't try to capture the vehicle because their (1) attack factor can only be used in CC *vs Personnel* (A20.5), which a vehicle certainly isn't. Perry sez that the vehicle will have to stop and immediately unload the hostile Unarmed unit, but the ink's still wet on that ruling.

- ¹² Although Prisoners remain unfriendly to the Guard. That is, being fired on by friendly OBA will lower the Prisoner's Morale level and the Guard can be Encircled by hostile fire without the Prisoner being affected.
- ¹³ And there's nothing the Guarding side can do to relieve a broken unit of its Guard duties since Prisoners can only be transferred between Good Order units. While the fourth sentence of A20.5 is somewhat unclear on whether broken Guards can abandon their Prisoners, Perry sez that they can't; the only time a Prisoner becomes automatically guarded by a new eligible unit in their Location is if their original Guard is eliminated.
- ¹⁴ Purists will be glad to know that Prisoners do not receive the -1 Entrenching DRM allowed to Russian units (A25.21). Phew.
- ¹⁵ 1 for SMC, 2 for HS/Crew, 3 for Squads.
- ¹⁶ If attacking its Prisoners in CC, it uses full firepower.
- ¹⁷ EXC: an NTC is not required if a Melee already exists in that Location, whether from the initial round of Escape attempt CC or from the actions of other units friendly to the Prisoner (A20.55). Note too that captured Italian, Japanese, or non-Finnish Axis Minor units will not attempt escape (A20.55 & G1.621).

¹⁸ Again, this is the *only* time that Prisoner leaders can use their leadership modifier. They can't even use it to help their fellow Prisoners pass their Escape NTC.

¹⁹ Really, I'm not kidding.

²⁰ Perry further says that Inherent SW like PF/MOL/ATMM are not available to Unarmed units, even if they are Armed. Your head spinning yet?



Japanese POWs on Iwo Jima

HIGHEST BATTLE

continued from page 6

5th Mountain Division, the Germans retook Fort du Mont Froid on 12 April. Two weeks later they received orders to evacuate the entire region.

Check out the scenario "Highest Battle of World War II" based on this action by Paul Kenny at our website: www.coastalfortress.com

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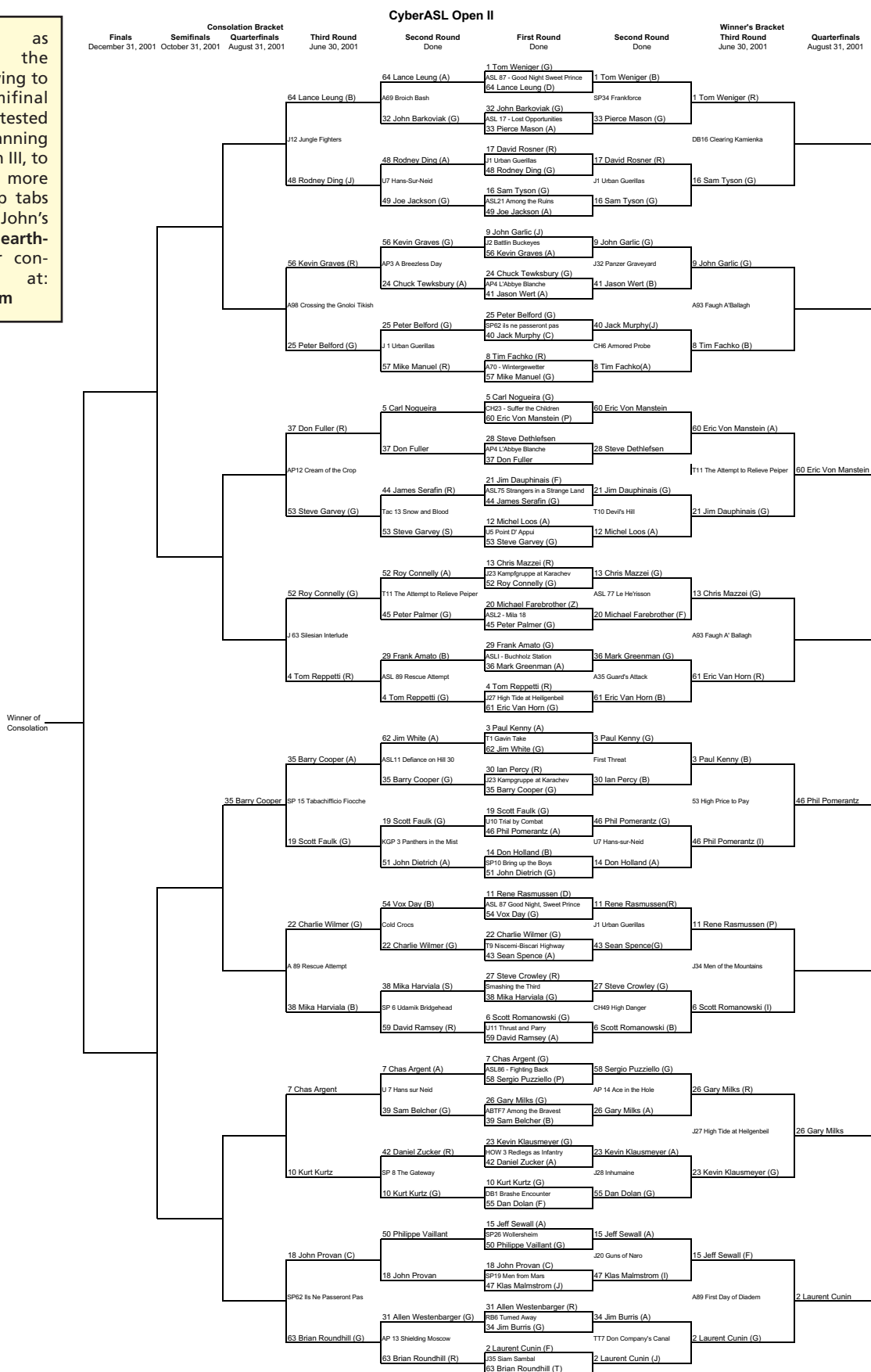
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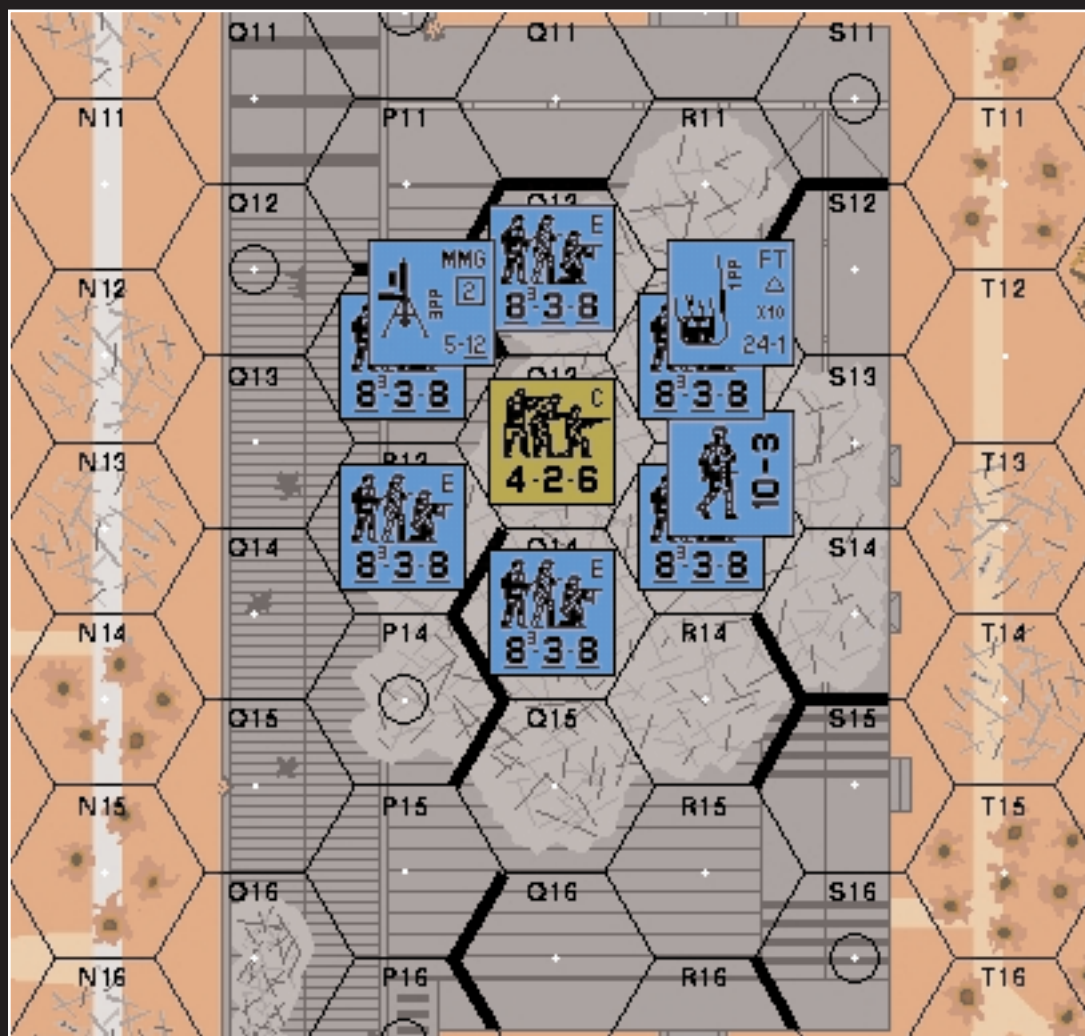
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CYBERASL OPEN BRACKET

With John Provan as Tournament Director, the CyberASL Open II is drawing to an exciting finish. Semifinal matches are being contested now. John is in the planning stages for CyberASL Open III, to begin this summer. For more information and to keep tabs on the action, check out John's website at: <http://home.earthlink.net/~johnprovan> or contact John directly at: john_provan@hotmail.com



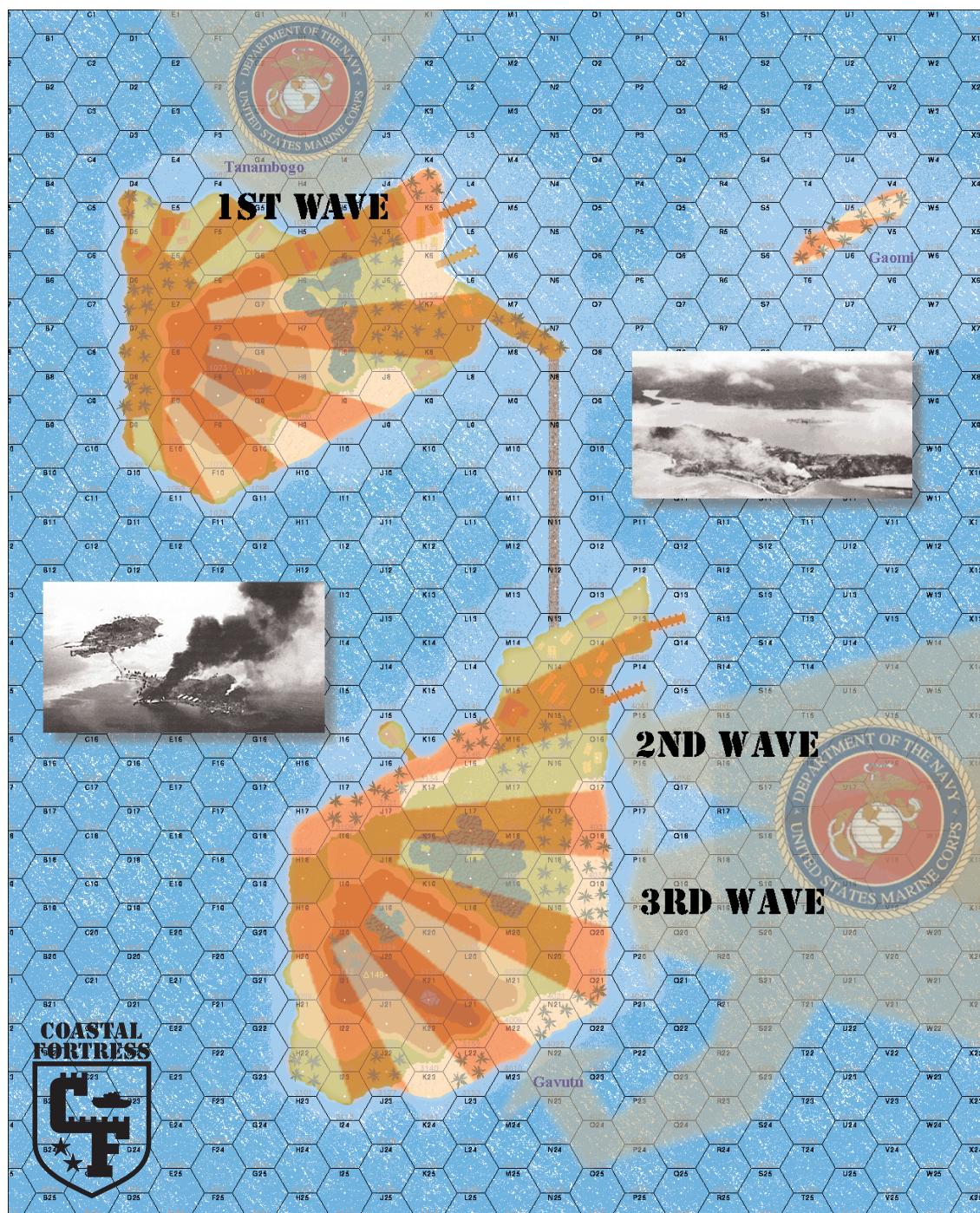
GAME ROOM DÉCOR



DESPAIR

IT'S ALWAYS DARKEST JUST BEFORE IT GOES PITCH BLACK.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE...



Islands Under Fire: A Look at Gavutu-Tanabogo



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doorstep of the Third Reich.

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on the actions in the Reichswald.

ASL in

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Rose and Roy "Booger" Connelly.